

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 6, 2006

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2005–06 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 2479

Introduced by Assembly Member Villines Cogdill
(Principal coauthor: Assembly Member Villines)
(Coauthor: Assembly Member Leslie)
(Coauthors: Senators Bowen and Cox)

February 23, 2006

An act to amend Section 7271 of the Food and Agricultural Code, relating to noxious and invasive weeds, and making an appropriation therefor.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2479, as amended, ~~Villines~~ *Cogdill*. Noxious and invasive weeds.

Existing law provides that ~~there is~~ within the Department of Food and Agriculture Fund *there is* the Noxious Weed Management Account, the funds in which are made available to eligible weed management areas or county agricultural commissioners for the control and abatement of noxious weeds according to an approved integrated weed management plan. Existing law provides that only 5% of the funds in the account shall be made available to the Department of Food and Agriculture for carrying out provisions relating to management of noxious and invasive ~~needs~~ *weeds*, developing noxious weed strategies, seeking new biological control agents, conducting workshops, and appointing a noxious weed coordinator and weed mapping specialist.

This bill would make various findings and declarations regarding the impact of noxious and invasive weeds on California. This bill

would increase the percentage of Noxious Weed Management Account funds that shall be made available to the department to 10%. This bill would also appropriate \$2,500,000 annually from the General Fund to be deposited into the Noxious Weed Management Account.

Vote: $\frac{2}{3}$. Appropriation: yes. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

- 1 SECTION 1. The Legislature hereby finds and declares each
- 2 of the following:
- 3 (a) The spread of certain harmful, nonnative species of plants
- 4 causes enormous damage to the environment and economy of
- 5 California.
- 6 (b) The destructive impact of invasive and often poisonous
- 7 noxious weeds is profound, affecting California's cropland,
- 8 rangeland, forests, parks, and wildlands.
- 9 (c) Enormous sums of private, state, and federal resources are
- 10 lost through decreased land productivity, degradation of wildlife
- 11 habitat, and outright destruction of crops, livestock, wetlands,
- 12 waterways, watersheds, and recreational areas caused by noxious
- 13 and invasive weeds.
- 14 (d) The estimated lost crop productivity caused by noxious
- 15 weeds is seven million four hundred thousand
- 16 ~~dollars (\$7,400,000)~~ dollars (\$7,400,000) nationwide, a large
- 17 proportion of which is attributable to California.
- 18 (e) Noxious and invasive weeds have destroyed large portions
- 19 of riparian habitat along creeks, streams, rivers, lakes, reservoirs,
- 20 and other bodies of freshwater in California, damaging the
- 21 integrity of the riparian system by altering erosion,
- 22 sedimentation, flooding, and fire.
- 23 (f) Proper noxious and invasive weed management in riparian
- 24 habitats is critical to sustaining California's freshwater supply.
- 25 (g) The invasive weed *Arundo donax* (giant reed) has
- 26 established large colonies across the state, most notably in
- 27 southern California, where one in 10,000 acre area of riparian
- 28 habitat the weed has been estimated to have consumed more than
- 29 30,000 acre-feet of water each year, or enough water to meet the
- 30 yearly freshwater needs of 150,000 persons.

1 (h) The invasive weed yellow star thistle has infested more
2 than 20,000,000 acres, roughly 22 percent of the state, and is
3 quickly expanding in the Sierra and into the Coastal Range,
4 making it the most common invasive plant in California, choking
5 out native plants; and killing horses who eat its poisonous early
6 season growth.

7 (i) California has a noxious weed management program for the
8 purpose of managing and eradicating noxious—~~weed~~ *weeds*
9 though specified local weed management areas. These programs
10 to prevent, control, manage, and eradicate nonnative and noxious
11 weeds have emphasized information sharing, education, and
12 public awareness and participation as critical to the success of
13 prevention, control, and eradication efforts.

14 (j) Local weed management groups have benefited greatly
15 from the commitment of the state to fund weed eradication, and
16 these weed management groups have been successful in
17 identifying and eradicating invasive and noxious weed species in
18 their regions.

19 SEC. 2. Section 7271 of the Food and Agricultural Code is
20 amended to read:

21 7271. (a) The Legislature designates the Department of Food
22 and Agriculture as the lead department in noxious weed
23 management and the department is responsible for the
24 implementation of this article in cooperation with the Secretary
25 for Resources.

26 (b) There is hereby created in the Department of Food and
27 Agriculture Fund the Noxious Weed Management Account.

28 (c) Funds appropriated for expenditure by the secretary for
29 purposes of this article may be spent without regard to fiscal year
30 and shall be allocated as follows:

31 (1) Eighty percent of moneys in the account shall be made
32 available to eligible weed management areas or county
33 agricultural commissioners for the control and abatement of
34 noxious weeds according to an approved integrated weed
35 management plan.

36 (2) Ten percent shall be made available toward research on the
37 biology, ecology, or management of noxious and invasive weeds.

38 These research moneys shall be made available to qualified
39 researchers through a grant program administered by the
40 department. Proposals shall be evaluated in consultation with the

1 Range Management Advisory Committee, with emphasis placed
2 on funding of needs-based, applied and practical research.

3 (3) Ten percent shall be made available to the department, and
4 shall only be used for the following purposes:

5 (A) Carrying out the provisions of this article.

6 (B) Developing of noxious weed control strategies.

7 (C) Seeking new, effective biological control agents for the
8 long-term control of noxious weeds.

9 (D) Conducting private and public workshops as needed to
10 discuss and plan weed management strategies with all interested
11 and affected local, state, and federal agencies, private
12 landowners, educational institutions, interest groups, and county
13 agricultural commissioners.

14 (E) Appointing a noxious weed coordinator and weed mapping
15 specialist to assist in weed inventory, mapping, and control
16 strategies.

17 SEC. 3. The sum of two million five hundred thousand
18 dollars (\$2,500,000) is hereby appropriated annually from the
19 General Fund and deposited into the Noxious Weed Management
20 Account which shall be available for expenditure pursuant to
21 Article 1.7 (commencing with Section 7270) of Chapter 1 of Part
22 4 of Division 4 of the Food and Agricultural Code.